

-State Species Abstract-
-Wyoming Natural Diversity Database-

EPIPACTIS GIGANTEA
GIANT HELLEBORINE
Family: Orchidaceae

Status:

US Fish & Wildlife Service: None.
Agency Status: USFS R2 sensitive

Heritage Rank:

Global: G3G4 State: S1
Range Context: Widespread/Edge
Wyoming Contribution Rank: Low

Description: Giant helleborine is a tall perennial orchid that grows from creeping rhizomes. The one or more stems are 30 to 100 cm tall and are essentially hairless until the inflorescence, when they become pubescent. There are usually ten or more green leaves per plant, that alternate up the stem. Each leaf is 5-11 cm wide and up to 25 cm long. The lower leaves are ovate and sessile while the upper leaves are linear-lanceolate. The foliage dies back in the fall. After the foliage turns brown, the new shoots begin to spread away from the rhizome. The inflorescence is composed of 3 to 12 rather showy, greenish-yellow (with purple veining) to brownish purple, flowers (after Cronquist et al, 1977).

Similar Species: *Cypripedium fasciculatum* has purplish-brown sepals, an inflated pouch-like lip, and a single pair of opposite leaves (Fertig et al. 1994).

Flowering/Fruiting Period: June to August.

Distribution: Occurs from southern British Columbia in Canada to Baja California and through most of the western United States to the Rocky Mountains and South Dakota to Texas and central Mexico (Rocchio et al.

2006). In Wyoming it is known from Jackson Hole, the Yellowstone Plateau, and eastern Big Horn Basin in Teton and Big Horn counties.

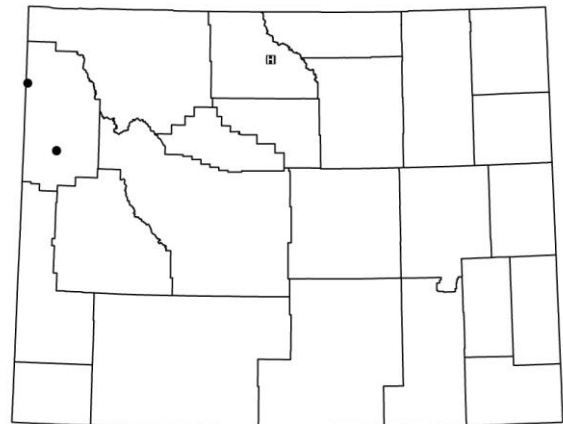
Habitat: Moist areas along pond margins, seeps and springs, especially near calcareous, warm springs. Elev. 4200-7300 ft.

Occurrences in Wyoming: Known from 3 extant occurrences in Wyoming (all of which have been discovered or relocated since 1991) and 1 historical record (last observed in 1896).

Abundance: State population estimated at 1100-3200 plants in less than 10 acres of total habitat at 3 main sites.

Trends: Populations in the Jackson Hole area are probably declining. The Bighorn Basin population has not been relocated in over 100 years and may be extirpated. Appears to be stable in Yellowstone National Park.

Protection status: Two occurrences are protected in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks (although the Grand Teton site is being impacted by grazing according to Marriott, 1991). Other known populations are on private lands.



Wyoming distribution of *Epipactis gigantea*.

Threats: Populations may be impacted by grazing and heavy recreational use of riparian habitats (Marriott 1991).

Managed Areas: Occurs on lands managed by Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks.

References:

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Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region.
Available:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/projects/scp/assessments/epipactisgigantea.pdf>

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